

# Iowa Site Inventory

Office of Historic Preservation  
Iowa State Historical Department  
East 12th & Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Site Number 76N 27W - 9  
District Name Legacy In Stone TR  
Map Reference # 31

## Identification

1. Site Name George and Susan Guberson Armstrong House
2. Village/Town/City Vic. Winterset Township Union County Madison
3. Street Address 2 1/2 Miles North of Winterset; 2 Miles East on G4R; 1/2 Mile North
4. Legal Location 76N 27W 9 SW1/4 SW1/4\*
- Urban: subdivision block parcel subparcel  
Rural: township range section % section of 1/4 section
- (Map 5)
5. UTM Location: zone 15 easting 418,630 northing 4,582,070; Acreage less than one acre
6. Owner(s) Name Groth Farms Inc. Everett Groth
7. Owner(s) Address Rt. 1, Box 285 Winterset IA 50273  
(Street address) (City) (State) (Zip)
8. Use: Present Storage Original Residence

## Description

9. Date of Construction c. 1856 Architect/Builder George Armstrong ?
10. Building Type:  
 single-family dwelling  industrial  other institutional  religious  
 multiple-family dwelling  educational  public  agricultural  
 commercial
11. Exterior Walls:  clapboard  stone  brick  board and batten  shingles  stucco  
 other \_\_\_\_\_
12. Structural System:  wood frame with interlocking joints  wood frame with light members (balloon frame)  
 masonry load-bearing walls  iron frame  steel frame with curtain walls  reinforced concrete  
 other Native limestone
13. Condition:  excellent  good  fair  deteriorated
14. Integrity:  original site  moved—if so, when? \_\_\_\_\_  
Notes on alterations, additions (with dates and architect, if known) and any other notable features of building and site:
15. Related Outbuildings and Property:  barn  other farm structures  carriage house  garage  privy  
 other \_\_\_\_\_
16. Is the building endangered?  no  yes—if so, why? deterioration
17. Surroundings of the building:  open land  woodland  scattered outbuildings  densely built-up  commercial  
 industrial  residential  other farmsted

18. Map



19. Photo  
Roll \_\_\_\_\_ Frame \_\_\_\_\_ View \_\_\_\_\_

\*Nomination boundary:

A circle, 150' diameter, with center point located at center point of house. Excludes outbuildings.

## **SIGNIFICANCE**

### **20. Architectural Significance**

--a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register

--b. Contributing structure \_\_\_\_\_

Theme(s): Vernacular Architecture

Subtheme(s): Function: Residential

The George and Susan Guiberson Armstrong house is an early example of a vernacular farm residence built of limestone. It is the only extant single cell house with entrance centered in the gable front. The most notable characteristic is the high state of preservation of this very small inexpensively constructed residence.

The 17 1/2' x 17 1/2' one story gabled house is constructed of locally quarried rubble limestone. The south public facade has a door centered in the gable. The east and west facades each have an under eave window. The north facade has no openings, but has an exterior beehive shaped stone chimney.

The main south facade is constructed of roughly squared quarry faced and rubble limestone laid in courses with random bond. Other facades are of uncoursed rubble. Joints are grapevine tooled, but not very carefully or regularly. Quoins and jambs are roughly squared quarry faced stone. Lintels and sills are of wood. The windows are not splayed. The interior reveals have wood lintels and sills and mortared sides. The sides have pieces of wood in them. These may have been decorative or may have had shutters attached. The door lintel is roughly squared quarry faced stone. There is no sill, since the door is flush with the ground. The door is recessed, and the reveal is paneled with undecroated wood. The overhanging eaves and verges are closed with mitred soffits and mitred boards against the stone.

The one room residence probably had a dirt floor and sleeping loft. Interior walls are coursed rubble with grapevine tooled joints. There is no woodwork except the lintels and sills. The fireplace has an arched opening. Grapevine tooling is used to make a ray-like design around the opening.

The design and quality of the stonework indicat that the house may have been built by the owner. However, even this inexpensively built residence evidence concern for aesthetics in the grapevine design around the fireplace and the detail around the window.

### **21. Historical Significance**

--a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register

--b. Contributing Structure \_\_\_\_\_

Theme(s): Early Settlement

George Arcmstrong was born in Ireland in 1817 and married Susan Guiberson in 1984. They were early settlers who came to Madison County in 1853. In 1855 Armstrong obtained patent deed to the 40 acre farm on which his house is built. In 1875 he still owned only the 40 acres. This small size farm indicates that Armstrong was a probably much less affluent than the average farmer.

Atlas of Madison Co., Iowa Philadelphia: Harrison & Warner, 1875.

Courthouse Records. Winterset, Iowa: Madison County Recorders' Office.

Mueller, Herman. History of Madison County, Iowa, 2 vols. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1915.

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**Sources**

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